



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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140th IPU Assembly

Doha (Qatar), 6 – 10 April 2019



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 5

FEM/29/5-Inf.1
21 March 2019

Contributing to the work of the 140th IPU Assembly from a gender perspective

Saturday, 6 April 2019
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Background Note

I. Arrangements for the debate

Participants will be invited to discuss the two draft resolutions on the agenda of the 140th IPU Assembly. They will discuss each topic from a gender perspective and issue recommendations on amendments to be submitted by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

To that end, after a brief presentation on the two draft resolutions, the Forum will split into two working groups from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss one of two suggested topics:

Group 1 – Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights	<i>Room Al Rayyan</i>
Group 2 – The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation	<i>Room Salwa 1</i>

On the recommendation of its Bureau, the Forum will designate a chair and a rapporteur for each group.

At the end of the discussion, each working group will agree on the key areas that its rapporteur will then present at the afternoon plenary sitting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Group1 – Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights

In today's global geopolitical climate, the involvement of mercenaries, foreign fighters and employees of private military and security companies in armed conflicts and in terrorist attacks is a growing threat to peace, human rights and international law.

During the discussion, participants will examine the tragic impact that this phenomenon has on the civilian population, and in particular on women and children; mercenary activities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and other human rights

violations; and the recruitment and financing of such activities. They will also turn their attention to the importance of the equal participation of women in efforts to achieve peace and security, and in particular, the need to ensure they contribute fully to the development and implementation of robust measures that tackle the tragic impact of mercenary activities in armed conflicts and terrorist attacks.

- *What are the most effective means of addressing human rights violations perpetrated by mercenaries, foreign fighters and employees of private military and security companies in armed conflicts and terrorist attacks?*
- *How is it possible to ensure that women and children in particular, are protected from such violations; that victims have access to support services, justice and redress; and that the perpetrators are prosecuted, punished and prevented from causing further harm?*
- *How can parliaments ensure that States respect their obligations under international human rights instruments, and that they fully enforce UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), other UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and general recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations¹ of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women?*
- *What good practices exist to guarantee the equal participation of women in peace negotiations, in national, regional and international security agreements and in the fight against terrorism?*
- *What role can women play, including on local association level, in combatting the recruitment and financing of terrorists and their activities nationally and internationally?*

Group 2 – The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation

How can parliaments contribute meaningfully to the process of examining trade agreements and reconciling such agreements with their commitments to the SDGs, which can only be achieved by forging a strong relationship with gender issues?

It is clear that the active participation of women at all levels and in all sectors is essential to achieving all the SDGs. Yet, all around the world, women remain marginalized in the economy. More and more often, they are employed in the lowest-paying sectors and have fewer opportunities to access property and credits. In this way, although they represent nearly half of the global population, women contribute only 37 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP) and own only one third of small and medium enterprises. In some developing countries, the percentage of female business owners is as low as 3-6 per cent². Furthermore, in order for trade and investment to be fair and equitable, and for it to play a truly significant role in women's economic empowerment, the trade system must be more inclusive and allow a greater number of women to participate in and enjoy the economic benefits of world trade, thus achieving sustainable results.

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 54th session, 2013, [CEDAW/C/GC/30](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/cerda/c/gc/30)

² World Trade Organization (WTO), 11th Ministerial Conference, "Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade outlines actions to empower women", 12 December 2017, https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/mc11_12dec17_e.htm

The members of Group 2 are therefore invited to discuss the following points:

- *How can parliaments remove the barriers that women face with regard to participating in trade, receiving financing and accessing public procurement and foreign markets?*
- *What good practices exist to encourage greater participation of women in new sectors of the economy?*
- *What good practices exist with regard to incorporating questions related to gender and the Sustainable Development Goals into international agreements on trade and investment?*
- *How is it possible to ensure that national and international trade and policy on infrastructure, industrialization and innovation become the driving forces behind poverty reduction among women and their true economic empowerment?*